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OF

EDWARD INGERSOLL BROWNE, A.M., LL.B.

HARVARD COLLEGE, 1855.

BY

EDWIN HALE ABBOT, A.M., LL.B.

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Edward S. Brown

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EDWARD INGERSOLL BROWNE, A.M., LL.B.

EDWARD INGERSOLL BROWNE was born in what was known as Franklin Place, Boston, on November 11, 1833, and died at his residence in Hyde Park, September 15, 1901. He was the son of Charles (Harvard College, 1812) and Elizabeth Isabella (Tilden) Browne. His grandfather, Capt. Moses Browne (Harvard College, 1768), of Beverly, was a captain in Col. Glover's famous regiment during the Revolutionary War. His home in Beverly, on Main Street, remained with slight alteration until very recent years. His large and beautiful garden covered the hillside and stretched along the street a long distance. During the Revolutionary War, the joint harbor of Beverly and Salem was the only one on the Atlantic coast not controlled by the British. Therefore these towns were the home ports of American privateers during the war. At its close, their vessels formed almost the whole commercial marine of the new nation, and thus all the foreign commerce of the infant Union centered in Beverly and Salem. The interesting old Main Street of Beverly still holds many fine mansions, which had been erected by the prosperous merchants of those days. The house of George Cabot was there, close by the house of Capt. Moses Browne. The Beverly Historical Society now has its home in another of those dignified old dwellings, while farther up the street, what is now the Town Hall of Beverly was formerly the private residence of Col. Israel Thorndike, with whose name that of Moses Browne is so closely associated. They were partners for many years, under the style of Browne and Thorndike, in the beginning of the last century.

On his mother's side, Edward Ingersoll Browne was a great-great-grandson of Josiah Browne, who (as well as Capt. Moses) was a descendant of the Puritan, Abraham Browne, who settled in Watertown, now Waltham, in 1631, as is recorded in Bond's "Genealogies and History of Watertown." Capt. Moses Browne is said to have been descended from Christopher Browne, of Stamford in Lincolnshire, and Tolethorpe in Rutlandshire, England. The

original grant of arms to Christopher Browne, which was dated July 20, 1480, was bequeathed to the New-England Historic Genealogical Society by the subject of this sketch. Another of his ancestors, John Browne, restored All Saints Church, in Stamford, and John's brother, William, was the founder of Browne's Hospital, or Bead House, which is still standing in Stamford. Edward Ingersoll Browne employed Messrs. Clayton & Bell, of London, to make an exquisite memorial window in honor of his ancestors and in commemoration of his own parents, in this interesting old church, and Dr. Edward Trollope, Bishop Suffragan of Nottingham, dedicated this window, in 1888. But, very characteristically, he did his best to keep most of his friends in America from knowing anything about it.

After Edward Ingersoll Browne had spent two years in the English High School, then under the charge of Mr. Thomas Sherwin, where he learned the mathematics needed for entrance at Harvard College, he entered the Boston Latin School, in 1848, and joined our class, which entered Harvard College in July, 1851. He was always a careful scholar, and took, both at school and in college, good rank; but never sought prominence, although, even in those days, he showed unusual maturity in intellectual taste. Mr. Epes Sargent Dixwell was then the principal; and Mr. Francis Gardner, the sub-master. There were also four assistant teachers during the three years we were in the Latin School. During this time, the English High School occupied, with the Latin School, a building on the south side of Bedford Street, nearly opposite what was then the church of the Rev. Dr. Watterston. The neighborhood was a place of attractive residence, and, excepting on Washington Street, was filled with dwelling houses. The home of Phillips Brooks' parents was around the corner on Rowe Street. The home of Judge Jackson adjoined the old First Church in Chauncy Place. The Latin School boys of that day were very proud of belonging to the oldest literary institution in the country, antedating even Harvard College; and the schoolhouse itself was very near the homes of most of them. Their playground was that corner of Boston Common lying between the path from West Street to the Old Elm, and Park Street and Beacon Street. Each school had its own yard and entrance, and about one hundred and fifty pupils. The English High School was intended to prepare boys for business life, and its course of study was arranged to be a substitute for collegiate education.

The Latin School was, and always had been, strictly limited to the preparation of boys for entrance at college. There were at that period in Boston no private schools for boys so highly esteemed as the Latin School, and the *jeunesse dorée* all went to the Latin School, and they were quite sufficiently proud of that distinction. The rivalry between these two schools was eager at all times, and was almost fierce on the playground, and usually showed itself on all occasions. Snow-ball fights in the winter, and great games of hockey and foot ball and base ball in the spring and autumn, were shared by all the boys in those days. The path from the head of West Street to the great elm was the bound on the one side; and Park Street fence, on the other. Sometimes there were more than a hundred boys on each side in these games. Browne played his part well, though not enthusiastically, for his taste and favorite occupations led him in other directions. When they entered Harvard College, the Latin School boys usually formed about a quarter of each class. They always had a social advantage from their previous association, and they also had passed through a more thorough preparatory course than most of the other students had enjoyed. Their five years' course of study and thorough intellectual drill at school made their freshman work dangerously easy, and, in comparison with students who came from other quarters, gave them much spare time for general reading and study outside of regular lines. Browne was really interested in his studies, and always held his own in every department; but he used his outside chances fully. He had a real, scholarly taste for all subjects of literary or historical character. He and I had become especially intimate while we were at school, partly by reason of inherited family friendship and association, and partly because we had formed common theories for intellectual improvement, and had adopted, in some cases together, common courses of systematic reading and the investigation of topics of common interest. He was following at that time systematically the course of training which was recommended in "Pycroft's Course of Reading." He very early formed at school the habit of committing to memory choice passages of prose and verse, usually, it is true, from English literature, but often from both Latin and Greek authors. This habit became absolutely fixed in college and was never dropped. I think those friends who knew him well in later life will agree with me in saying that they have known few men who

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equalled him in his extraordinary store of rare quotations and in wide knowledge and memory of the finest things in literature. I certainly never knew any one else who was so abundantly equipped and who had such readiness in apt quotation. It was the fashion in those days, as part of the school training, to cap Latin verses, and to write both Latin verse and prose. In these accomplishments Browne was among the best. He was also very fond of debate. He had a keen sense of humor, and often conducted arguments with a delicious gravity which misled his opponents as to his real views. On stormy days during the winter, the Latin School was kept from nine o'clock until two, instead of holding the usual forenoon and afternoon sessions. On one such stormy day, shortly after morning prayers, Mr. Gardner made some criticisms upon Browne's conduct. The result was that Browne skilfully drew Mr. Gardner into a discussion which so stirred the soul of that eminent teacher that it lasted, to the complete exclusion of class work, through the morning session until school was dismissed at two o'clock. The thesis was this: Assuming that a man had already become so bad that he deserved, and was, to be eternally damned;—Query: Was the last wrong act which he committed equally sinful in itself with his first wrong deed? Browne, with much solemnity, contended that the last wrong act was not so black a sin as the first instance of wrong doing. Mr. Gardner grew hot in his efforts to convince Browne of his supposed error. He strove so earnestly that, when all his arguments had apparently failed to move Browne from his position and the hour for closing school had arrived and ended all disposition on the boy's part to use up time, Mr. Gardner emphatically told Browne that such fatal obliquity of moral sense must certainly result in ending Browne's career in the place to which the wicked subject of discussion was confessedly doomed. Browne, meantime, had conducted the discussion with such grave and persistent courtesy, that probably our old teacher never perceived the fun of the situation, nor appreciated the skill with which Browne had used up the whole school-day, chiefly for the amusement of a parcel of mischievous boys.

Browne was thoroughly refined and intellectual in his recreations and tastes. Always kind and pleasant; uniformly just and fair; sagacious and, above all, desirous of helping any one who needed aid, he maintained the even tenor of his habits, and was always a courteous gentleman in the best sense of the word. He was one

who contributed to the Class window in Memorial Hall, and to many other kindly subscriptions in aid of less fortunate classmates. He left an estate exceeding $800,000. His readiness to lend a helping hand wherever it was needed, and his great generosity, were only equaled by the efforts he made to conceal the cases in which he had rendered aid. He seemed always on the watch to discover persons needing his help, and to be searching for opportunities where he could gratify this liberal spirit. His quiet benefactions were frequently quite large, but the care with which he kept them out of sight did not prevent those near him from knowing many things which it would now be a breach of friendship to disclose. He thoroughly understood also the worldly convenience, as well as the spiritual wisdom, of not letting his right hand know what his left hand did. Whether he bought a new horse for a poor cabman, or dropped twenty-five thousand dollars in one lump into the treasury of some favorite benevolence, his invariable stipulation was absolute silence as to his part in the transaction. While we were schoolmates and fellow students in college, my knowledge of his generous acts in daily life was intimate, and those who were nearest to him in later years join in the testimony that he never changed. Through my relation to our class, as its secretary, I became the repository of many pathetic facts known to few of our associates, and during fifty years of close friendship had abundant experience of the exquisite delicacy and tenderness of his kindly spirit. But the injunction of secrecy still abides, and I cannot speak more particularly without doing what he would be unwilling that I should do. He thus found himself able to reach many poor college friends without their knowledge, and through his whole life eased the hardships of many others who never knew he was their friend.

His first room in college was in the old Plympton house, and afterwards he occupied the southeast corner of Stoughton, over the Proctors' room. His inclination toward historical and antiquarian research was then very marked, yet he never seriously undertook any large systematic work. It lent, however, through life a peculiar charm to his conversation and companionship. He loved literature and architecture, and travelled in the fine, old leisurely way, though he never spent much strength on technical details. He once carefully followed the old Roman wall across England. Another time he spent almost an entire summer in wandering through Brittany,

where, true to his kindly nature, he devoted as much time and effort to educating the small boyish attendant whom he took with him, into the knowledge of everything he visited, as if the training of that young mind had been the chief object of his journey. Many summers abroad were spent in slow wanderings through the valley of the Loire and in old Touraine, and through Sweden, Russia, Turkey and Switzerland. He kept delightful journals of his travels, in bound volumes of local photographs, with his own running notes in manuscript. They are too charming to be now allowed to be lost. He was fond, in later life, of reading novels, a taste shared by so many lawyers that novels seem the natural companion of the law book.

His professional life was devoted chiefly to the care of trusts, for which his sagacity, common sense and sound judgment peculiarly fitted him; while his sympathetic nature won for him the affection of those for whom he cared. His own private room in his Boston home was filled with their expressions of affection, to which he could never refer without strong emotion. This was his sacred, private retreat, and it is not right for the public to enter it now. He steadily refused to help the secretary to details of his life for class reports, and always said he had no history to write. After he had been admitted to the Suffolk bar, he spent some months in the office of Messrs. Sohier and Welch, and later formed a business connection with his friend and kinsman, Charles Thorndike. Their names remained together, as Browne and Thorndike, until he died, thus renewing the old firm name of their grandfathers. His skill and success as a trustee are well known, and he managed his own personal fortune with such ability that he developed his inheritance into an ample competence. He was never married, and his devotion to his sister, who shared his home, was unwearied, and her companionship was the delight of his life. The law of kindness was written in his heart, and his loyalty to his friends brought him a rich return, for few men were ever more heartily loved. While he was a boy, his character showed itself in unusual close intimacy with, and affection for, his father. He seemed always to prefer his father's company to that of any other person. No remembrance of his boyish life is more vivid or more attractive than the picture of them together, — the pleasant old gentleman, walking slowly arm-in-arm with the bright, distinguished-looking son, in his round jacket. In the days of Browne's boyhood,

coat-tails began only with admission to college, and Latin School boys then looked more like little Etonians than our school boys do now. The father made the boy's friends his own, and he is not yet forgotten by many of those who were so fortunate as to be honored with his regard. The likeness of the son to the father increased in his later years, and any allusion to his father never, to the very end of his life, failed to fill the son's face with affectionate light.

Besides his numerous public and private benefactions during his lifetime, his will contains many public bequests, which it seems proper to enumerate:

Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Alabama, managed by Booker T. Washington,	$10,000
Hampton Institute of Virginia, formerly managed by Gen'l Armstrong,	10,000
New England Home for Little Wanderers,	20,000
Young Men's Christian Association of Hyde Park, the same to be invested and the income thereof only to be used to defray the annual expenses of said Association.	20,000
North Bennet Street Industrial School,	20,000
The Children's Hospital.	10,000
Massachusetts General Hospital,	10,000
Boys' Institute of Industry,	10,000
Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary,	10,000
Boston Children's Aid Society,	10,000
Episcopal City Mission,	10,000
Boston Museum of Fine Arts,	10,000
House of Good Samaritan,	5,000
The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children,	5,000
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,	5,000
Boston Home for Incurables,	5,000
Boston Asylum and Farm School for Indigent Boys,	5,000
The Vincent Memorial Hospital,	5,000
Boston North End Mission,	5,000
The Beverly Historical Society,	3,000
The Bostonian Society,	1,000
The New-England Historic Genealogical Society,	1,000

The bulk of his property was left in trust, to continue during the lives of his sister and three other small annuitants, and the survivors of them and for twenty years thereafter, and then to be equally divided as follows:

The City of Boston to be by it forever held, managed, invested and reinvested, as a special fund, the annual income whereof shall be applied to the adornment and benefit of said City by the erection of statues, monuments, fountains for men and beasts and for the ornament of its streets, ways, squares and parks in such manner as will promote the pleasure, comfort, education, patriotism and good taste of its citizens, and likewise for the maintenance and repair of any statues or other structures as aforesaid erected by money supplied from this bequest.

The Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, a corporation duly established under and by virtue of the laws of said Commonwealth, the capital to be by it forever held, managed, invested and reinvested, as a special Fund to be known as the Browne Fund, the annual income thereof to be applied to the general uses of said Infirmary in which he was for many years deeply interested, as well as the Secretary thereof.

The President and Fellows of Harvard College, a Corporation duly established by and under the laws of said Commonwealth, and from which he and his ancestors have graduated for five successive generations, the same to be by it forever held, managed, invested and reinvested as a separate fund to be known as the Browne Fund, one-half of the annual income whereof shall be applied to increasing the salaries of the various professors of and teachers in said College as the President and Fellows thereof for the time being may, from time to time, deem best; and the other half to assisting pecuniarily poor and deserving undergraduates of said College, or to providing Scholarships for said purpose.

Browne's character and life may be summed up very briefly. A faithful friend and a noble-hearted gentleman, from early boyhood to the last day of his life; dignified when occasion called; generous always and courteous to everybody, he was much beloved and will be long remembered by those who were so fortunate as to be counted among his friends. The sister whom he so faithfully attended, survived the brother less than three months, and her death closes the family roll.